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# SOUTH DAKOTA READING CONTENT STANDARDS

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### **South Dakota Reading/Language Arts Revision Committee Members**

**Doug Allen**, High School English Teacher, Viborg School District

**Marlys Aman**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher, Menno School District

**Ann Anderson**, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Belle Fourche School District

**Nancy Anderson**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Sioux Falls School District

**Ann Blondheim**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher, Holy Trinity Catholic School

**Kathy Budahl**, Assistant Professor of Education, Dakota Wesleyan University

**Dr. Terri Buechler**, High School English Teacher, Beresford School District

**Jane Carlson**, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Beresford School District

**S. Candyce Chrystal**, Associate Professor in Education, Mt. Marty College

**Christine Cope**, Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Specialist, Harrisburg School District

**Brenda Danielson**, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher, Scotland School District

**Tamara Dawson**, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher, Howard School District

**Melissa Deckert**, 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Freeman School District

**Jean Denton**, Kindergarten Teacher, St. Joseph School, Pierre

**Brittney Eide**, 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teacher, Corsica School District

**Janna Ellingson**, High School Language Arts Teacher/Curriculum Director, Flandreau Public School District

**Linda Fansin**, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher/Guidance Counselor, Hurley School District

**Cindy Froiland**, High School Language Arts Teacher, Parker School District

**Jeanene Fuchs**, Literacy Coach, Bennett County School District

**Jennifer Gilbert**, Middle School Behavior Strategist, Rapid City School District

**Suzanne Giovannettone**, 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Special Education Teacher, Sisseton School District

**Jill Greenway**, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, John Paul II School

**Carolyn Guhin**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher, St. Joseph School, Pierre

**Sue Hall-Martin**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Spearfish School District

**Lonni Harrison**, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teacher, Sioux Falls School District

**Nancy Heidenreich**, High School Language Arts Teacher, Faulkton School District

**Ann Hengen**, Literacy Support Coach, Rapid City School District

**Carol Hess**, Professor of Education, Black Hills State University

**Stacy Huber**, High School English Teacher, Wakonda School District

**Lois Hyde**, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Castlewood School District

**Vanet Jensen**, Education Disabilities Coordinator, Head Start Pre-Birth through Five

**Mary G. Johnson**, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts/Reading Teacher, Sioux Falls School District

**Sherry Knutson**, High School English Teacher, West Central School District

**Gail Krause**, 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher, Hamlin School District

**Constance Krueger**, Literacy Support Teacher/High School Language Arts Teacher, Rapid City School District

**Ann Kuper**, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher, Dell Rapids School District

**Carol Lacher**, Kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Ipswich School District

**Lisa Larson**, 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teacher, Sioux Falls School District

**Dixie Linn-Norberg**, 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teacher, White River School District

**Deb Mack**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Castlewood School District

**Jo Ann Marr**, High School Special Education Teacher, Custer School District

**Caroline McGillvrey**, 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Wolsey-Wessington School District

**Janell Millian**, Title I Teacher, Wood School District

**Kelly L. Neill**, Elementary Principal, Dell Rapids St. Mary Catholic School

**Lindsay Nolte**, 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teacher, Canton School District

**Sharon Olbertson**, Adjunct Faculty, Killian Community College

**Emily Olson**, High School English Teacher, Beresford School District

**Kimberly Pedersen Gullickson**, High School Special Education Teacher, Chamberlain School District

**Shirley Permann**, 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade English Teacher, Gettysburg School District

**Paula Pierce**, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher, Rapid City School District

**Sue Rayman**, 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher, Emery School District

**Beth Renner**, Kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Britton-Hecla School District

**Julie Rohde**, 7<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Colome School District

**Sena Rombough**, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher, Miller Area School District

**Kathy Sanderson**, High School English Teacher, De Smet School District

**Sheri Schneider**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Hamlin School District

**Melissa Shanks**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher, Elk Point-Jefferson School District

**Maralee Shoup**, Title I Teacher, Gettysburg School District

**Dr. Vicki Sterling**, Professor, Dakota State University

**Deb Sternhagen**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Bon Homme School District

**Doris Stiles**, Reading First Coach, Pierre School District

**Lisa Sullivan**, Assistant Professor of Education, University of Sioux Falls

**Amanda Thronson**, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher, McCook Central School District

**Becky Thurman**, High School English Teacher, Sioux Falls School District

**Elaine Titze**, 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Mt. Vernon School District

**Loretta Trenerry**, 7<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teacher/Librarian/K-12 Spanish Teacher, Hurley School District

**Susan Umberger**, High School English Teacher, Burke School District

**Roxana Uttermark**, School Psychologist, North Central Special Education Cooperative

**Kathleen Valnes**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Day School

**Pam VanZee**, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Miller Area School District

**Becky Wahl**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, St. Joseph's Indian School

**Stacy Weise**, 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teacher, Canton School District

**Jacqueline Wells-Fauth**, 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade English Teacher, Wolsey-Wessington School District

**Deb Winburn**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Groton Area School District

**Jeanne Winter**, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, Sioux Valley School District

**Rebecca Withee**, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher, Rapid City School District

**Sherri Wolles**, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts/Reading Teacher, Sioux Falls School District

**Teresa Yeaman**, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Colome School District

**Jayne Zielenski**, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher, Sioux Falls School District

# **South Dakota Language Arts Content Standards**

## **INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW**

### **PREFACE**

These Language Arts Standards are set forth to ensure that graduates of South Dakota's schools have the knowledge, skills, and competencies essential to leading productive, fulfilling, and successful lives as they continue their education, enter the workforce, and assume their civic responsibilities.

South Dakota Codified Law 13-3-48 addresses the issue of challenging state content standards. The adopted amendment reads as follows: "The secretary of the Department of Education shall prepare and submit for approval of the South Dakota Board of Education academic content standards in language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science for kindergarten through grade twelve. Each school district shall adopt and implement clearly defined and measurable course guidelines so as to meet the state academic content standards."

With input from students, parents, teachers, and communities of South Dakota, the Language Arts Standards Committee was charged with revision of the current South Dakota Content Standards and Performance Descriptors. The final document evolved from recent research in best practices in teaching, the **No Child Left Behind** legislation, experience in classrooms with the existing South Dakota Content Standards, the evolution of published standards from other states, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Frameworks and descriptors, International Reading Association/National Council of Teachers of English standards for the English Language Arts, numerous professional publications, and lengthy discussions by experienced kindergarten through grade sixteen, South Dakota educators.

The content students need to acquire at each grade level is stated explicitly in these standards. With student mastery of this content, South Dakota schools will be competitive with the best educational systems in other states and nations. The standards are comprehensive and specific, they are rigorous, and they represent South Dakota's commitment to excellence. The standards are firm but not unyielding; they will be modified in future years to reflect new research and scholarship.

### **THE PURPOSE OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA STANDARDS DOCUMENT**

The South Dakota standards provide a listing of essential core content to be taught and learned. The standards are designed to guide the planning of curriculum and to anchor the assessment of learning from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Performance descriptors bridge the content standards to assessments of the standards, provide information to teachers and students regarding student progress toward mastery of the standards, and give them specific targets for instruction and learning. The standards provide a common set of goals and expectations for all students in all schools.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

As students move from kindergarten through grade 12, levels of cognitive demand and complexity of content, skills, and processes increase. New skills emerge, and basic skills are subsumed within more advanced skills as students progress through the grades. Grade-level standards specify what students should know and have mastered at the end of each grade level, while curriculum specifies what teachers will teach. Teachers are charged with introducing skills in earlier grades before mastery is expected and with reviewing skills students will need to use in mastering the grade-level standards. For this reason, teachers must be aware of and skilled in teaching the content, skills, and processes described in standards immediately below and above as well as at their own grade-level assignment.

## FORMAT OF THE STANDARDS DOCUMENT

The comprehensive standards document for language arts is divided into three separate strands: reading, writing and listening, viewing and speaking. Each strand is divided into key learning concepts, called **indicators**. **Standards** represent expected outcomes for students completing each grade level. Although the standards define three separate strands of language arts, these three strands are integrative and meant to work together to inform and enrich each other. The division of language arts into separate standards and strands is merely a method that allows us to highlight the special features of each and to identify developmentally appropriate skills and behaviors. The document is organized by grade so that a student, parent, classroom teacher, administrator, or school board member can quickly review what learning outcome is expected at each specific grade.

The standards are the targets all students need to meet at the proficient level by the end of each grade level. The standards are organized by grade level so a student, parent, classroom teacher, administrator, or local school board member can quickly review what learning is expected at each specific grade. The Bloom's Taxonomy level of cognitive challenge is listed in the standards document to make clear the level at which each standard should be assessed.

All standards in each grade level need to be met at the proficient level by the time students are tested for these skills on the state assessments. For early grades not assessed on the state assessments, students need to master the standards at each grade level in order to be adequately prepared to meet the next grade-level standards and subsequently, to achieve the proficient level at the grade levels tested.

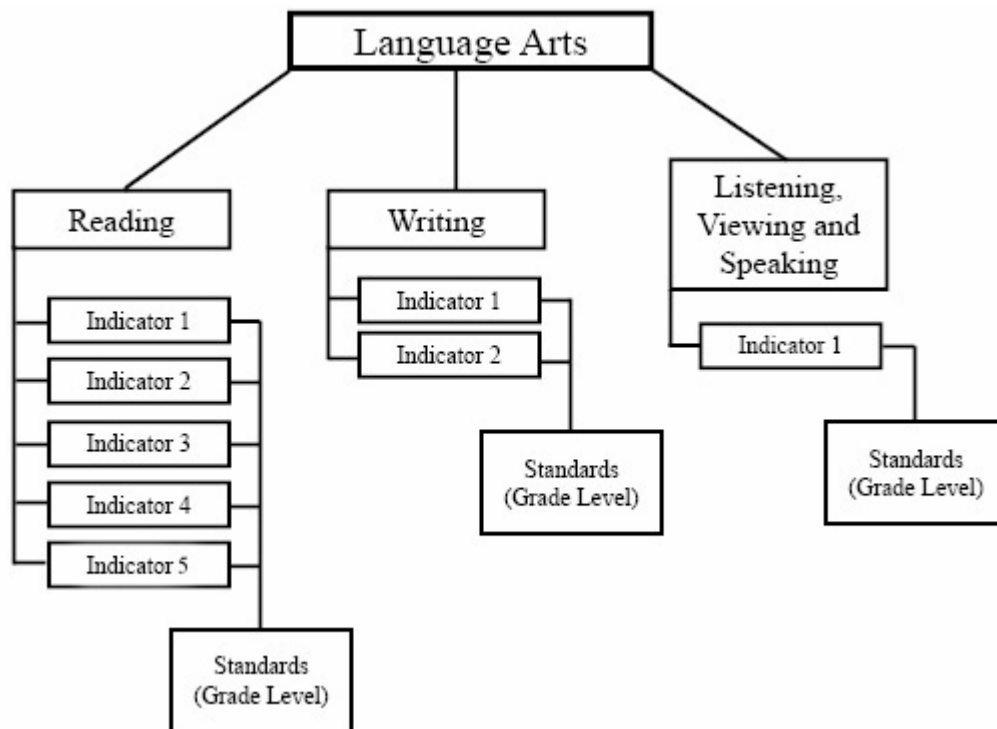
The standards are also provided in a side-by-side format and a K-12 format so the alignment of standards from grade to grade is immediately apparent. This section of the document contains indicators and grade-level standards.

- **Indicators** are the common threads that represent expected outcomes for all students preparing to graduate from South Dakota schools.
- **Grade-level content standards** represent expected outcomes for students completing each grade level.

The performance descriptors are organized into proficiency levels. These proficiency levels describe how a student at that level would be expected to perform the grade-level standards. To identify increasing proficiency in language arts, the levels are labeled as follows:

- **Advanced:** A student performing at the advanced level exceeds expectations for that grade level. The student is able to perform the content standards for the grade at a high level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency beyond that specified by the grade-level standards.
- **Proficient:** A student performing at the proficient level meets expectations for that grade level. The student is able to perform the content standards for the grade at the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency specified by the grade-level standards.
- **Basic:** A student performing at the basic level performs below expectations for that grade level. The student is able to perform some of the content standards for the grade below the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency specified by the grade-level standards.

A student performing below the basic level is unable to perform the content standards for the grade. Therefore, no description is provided below the basic level.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This document uses appropriate language arts terminology, so a reader may occasionally encounter an unfamiliar term. In order to assist the reader with terminology used in this document, a **glossary** has been written with specific definitions to clarify intended meaning.

A resource list is provided in the appendix as a sampling of possible information sources for teachers to use. Because new resources are constantly becoming available, this list is in no way intended to be an exhaustive or specified list of resources teachers are required to use. The reader is

also cautioned that electronic media sites often change addresses. Use of a search engine is sometimes required to locate the resources when addresses change.

## **A MESSAGE TO TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, SUPERINTENDENTS, AND OTHERS WHO WILL USE THE DOCUMENT**

The content standards revision committee was made up of a group of K-16 teachers who pooled their thoughts and experiences to provide a starting place for reaching our goal: each student mastering each standard to at least the proficient level.

A set of standards is simply a place to begin—they lay the foundation for measurable, consistent, high-level student learning; however, teachers must consider their individual students and select the methods that will work best for their classrooms. It is our hope that these ideas will help our fellow teachers create interesting and challenging lessons. We trust our colleagues and do not wish this document to appear proscriptive. **The curriculum of each district must provide students with rigor and topics beyond those of the standards in order to ensure mastery.**

Clearly, there is more to teaching and learning than these standards. Adjustments will need to be made for those students who exceed the standards, and for those who cannot easily meet them. Use these standards as a starting point to create an environment where students can learn to live and thrive in a constantly changing, increasingly complex world.

**IMPORTANT NOTE TO TEACHERS: Because the standards have been vertically aligned K-12 to assure rigor, it is imperative that all content area teachers are aware of where their students have been, need to be, and are going in order to meet graduation requirements.**

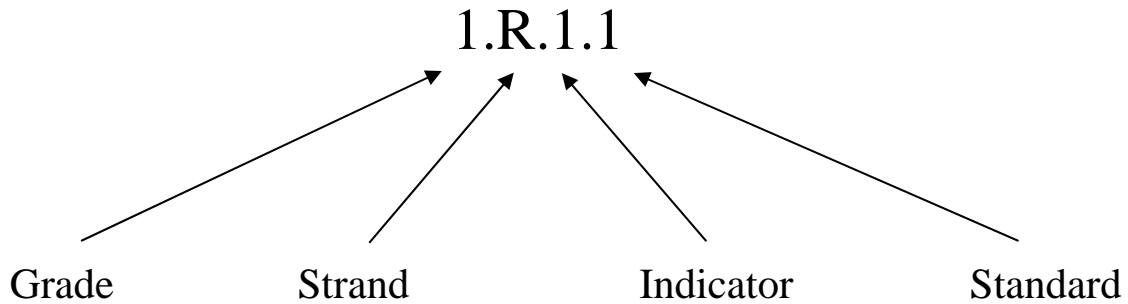
## **CONCLUSION**

Recognize that this document is designed as a foundation guide for schools in the planning of language arts curriculum from kindergarten through twelfth grade. A close look demonstrates that, at every grade level, students apply similar language skills and concepts as they use increasingly more complex materials to build upon and refine their knowledge, gaining sophistication and independence as they grow.

## Guide to the Numbering and Symbol System

### Used in the Document

Standards are coded to cross-reference grades, strands, indicators, and standards.



**Grade** refers to the grade level at which the standards are to be mastered by students.

**Strand** refers to the major area of language arts (e.g. reading; writing; listening, viewing and speaking) in this group of standards address. These strands are coded:

**R** for Reading

**W** for Writing

**LVS** for Listening, Viewing and Speaking

**Indicator** refers to the number of the indicator for this goal or strand. Each goal has one or more related indicators that describe key aspects of the goal.

**Standard** refers to the number of the grade-level standard for the indicator. Each indicator has one or more grade-level standard(s) that describes what students will know and be able to do related to the indicator at the specific grade level.